

The Times-Dispatch

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WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 1913.

ONE STEP AT A TIME.

Young men in politics for the first time are apt to be in a hurry to cleanse the world of ills that endured a long time before the young men fed from the bottle. They get enthusiastic and jump around and advance one scheme after another, inspired by a fine idealism. Therefore, we advise the Young Men's Registration Committee of Richmond to go ahead and get its first job done, and done right, before it enlarges into more permanent and necessary activities.

The Times-Dispatch welcomes such an organization as has been outlined and founded; it has urged upon young men the need for banding together for civic righteousness; within a few days, it has pointed out that the mere registration of men without informing them was an incomplete achievement. But the Times-Dispatch has had an intimate acquaintance with municipal and State politics to learn that it is the most practical and material thing in the world. The reformer has to centre his efforts and keep right on the job, if he expects to beat the other fellow who is inspired by the most potent of motives, his own private welfare.

What the young men want to do right now is to go after those 5,000 men who have pledged to register. They have no idea of the terrible inertia of which men are capable. Pledges are sacred things everywhere save in politics. Of the 5,000 perhaps half will fail to carry out their promises unless prodded and persuaded and led to the City Hall. If the young men sit down placidly to count up what a wonderful score they have made, and peer around for new worlds to conquer, they will find a marvelous dwindling in the results. To put 5,000 names on the books is a huge task, not to be accomplished by a burst of speed, it takes plugging. From now until May 3 no other interest or issue should divert the civic energy of the young men from this worthy and trying task of getting men to qualify.

After May 3 let us have a permanent organization for the study of civic problems and the methods of getting results. This, too, ought to concentrate on one practical issue, and put all its strength into understanding local conditions and their remedy. We suggest that the problem of municipal public utilities would be a good beginning. It is the big problem. To master it almost every other question of moment must come under scrutiny. A year spent in grasping the principles of public service and making them clear to the 5,000 plus would be better than any amount of random hot air. Politicians do not talk. They do.

We are not pessimists. We expect the young men to have their own candidates for Council and board and Legislature in a few years. We do warn them, however, that they have to learn the game and go slow. Otherwise, the smooth and aimable gentlemen of the inner ring will wipe the earth up with the young men. It is a case of amateur against professional. The professional is a success because he does just one thing, and does it well. Is the point clear?

HOW TEXAS IS DESTROYING THE FEE SYSTEM.

The fee system of compensating public officials in Texas just what it is in Virginia—a gigantic evil that has grown up within the State and which has proven itself to be one of the most prolific sources of graft known to the public to use the description of H. E. Ellis, an expert investigator of the government of the Lone Star State. Texas has not abolished the system, but it has largely destroyed its vice by enacting a law limiting the fees of office to be charged and received by the several county and city officers. The law goes into effect December 14.

The original endeavor in Texas was to place the fee officers upon a salary basis, but it was later decided to permit the collection of fees preferred by law until the maximum amount fixed is reached, turning the excess of fees over that maximum into the State treasury, after there is deducted from it the fixed compensation of assistants and legitimate office expenses. The result is not what it should be, in that the maximum fee compensation allowed the officers is excessive, but it was deemed expedient to compromise rather than let the pernicious system go unchanged. There is a fee officers' plunderband in Texas, just as there is in Virginia.

Under the new statute, in counties having less than 25,000 population the following are the maximum amounts of fees to be paid the officers named: county judge, \$2,500; sheriff, \$2,750; county clerk, \$2,250; county attorney, \$2,250; district clerk, \$2,250; tax collector, \$2,250; tax assessor, \$2,250.

Justices of the peace and constables in counties containing a city or more than 20,000 inhabitants are allowed \$2,000 each, to be paid out of the fees of the office.

In counties containing 25,000 inhabitants, the maximum amount allowed is as follows: county judge, \$2,500; sheriff, \$3,000; county clerk, \$2,400; county attorney, \$2,400; district clerk, \$2,400; tax collector, \$2,400; tax assessor, \$2,400.

In counties containing a city of over 25,000 inhabitants, or in such counties as contain 35,000 population, the following are the maximum amounts receivable: county judge, \$3,500; sheriff, \$3,500; collector, \$2,750; county attorney, \$3,500; district attorney, \$2,500; inclusive of salary paid by the State; district clerk, \$2,750; tax collector, \$2,750; tax assessor, \$2,750.

Deputies and assistants are appointed by the county judge, if the officer requesting them can prove their aid necessary. First assistants or chief deputies are paid \$1,500, heads of departments not exceeding \$1,500, and all others not more than \$1,200. The amount of compensation paid each subordinate is a matter of public record.

The law authorizes an expense account which provides for many items not heretofore paid for by the State. This account, duly itemized, is submitted monthly to auditors and allowed. Such accounts take care of the necessary expense of the conduct of the office, stationery, stamps, telephone, traveling, etc. This account is paid for out of the excess fees collected.

Much reform is effected by this measure, but the people of Texas are going to reduce the fee system to a salary basis as soon as there can be submitted to them for their approval a constitutional amendment which will place every officer, from the Governor down, on a salary scale. The reports and accounts of the Texas fee offices reveal "outrageous charges" for work performed. Moreover, Texans declare that "the system is all wrong, and the sooner the people change it the sooner will relief be had from the evil that has an abiding place in every courthouse in the land."

Boiled down to the marrow, the course of the people of Texas is this: First, establish a maximum fee compensation for fee officials; second, abolish the fee system utterly and substitute a fixed salary system therefor. The people of the Lone Star State cannot cut down the fee system at one fell stroke because of constitutional obstacles, but the people of Virginia can, with one sweeping and mighty blow, destroy in this Commonwealth the inexcusable and outrageous device which has wasted hundreds of thousands of dollars unrighteously exacted from an overburdened and oppressed people.

WHO IS TO BLAME FOR DIRT?

The Houston Post agrees with us that Southern cities are dirtier than those of the North or West. Discussing our questions as to the cause, it draws one conclusion that does not apply to Richmond. This is that Northern cities can be kept clean because they are compact. The same amount of paving, sewerage and street cleaning serves twice the number of people. If this reasoning be correct, Richmond ought to be the cleanest city in the country, because it is the most compact and densely populated. It is not clean.

About the negro, our contemporary is more pertinent. It says: "No doubt the filthy negro districts of most of our Southern cities account for much that is lacking in our civic excellence, but in every Southern city there are white districts that are quite as filthy as the negro districts. Besides, we cannot lay the blame upon the negroes even for the filthiness of the negro districts. As a rule, they are compelled to live under conditions which white landlords fix upon them—conditions which include a lack of sewerage, drainage, water, paving and other essentials of wholesome living. The plain truth of the matter is landlordism, especially the landlordism that provides living room for the poor."

In Richmond we believe this is too sadly true. From present signs, the negroes are keenly awake to the need and desirability of cleanliness. They are holding meetings and making plans for active participation in the general clean-up in May. They are hurt and angry at the accusation of uncleanness. This is a good sign. Resenting an accusation is often the beginning of betterment.

In solemn fact, the negro is not treated justly. He is not given the living conditions that foster civic pride. He is exploited by private owners and forgotten by public officers. He lives without sanitary sewerage because he gets no water or drain connections. Either the property owner or the city is delinquent.

A concrete proof of how the negroes regard the situation is the protest against the dumping of the rubbish gathered during Clean-Up Week around the homes of colored people. The point is clear that they will not profit greatly by clearing their neighborhood for a dump. The city must do its share, and by proper treatment of the negro encourage his growing self-respect and foster his worthy efforts for clean and decent homes.

A LECTURE COURSE FOR THE PEOPLE.

When Richmond College moves to its beautiful new home at Westhampton we hope that it will leave in Richmond the Thomas lectures. The thirty-fourth course on the James Thomas lecture endowment concludes tonight with a discourse on "The Larger Selfishness," by President George H. Vincent, of the University of Minnesota, and it is in order to say here that two more popular and more really helpful lectures than those of the course this year—Dr. William Lyon Phelps, of Yale, and President Vincent—could not have been found.

The fact that the college chapel has been packed at each of these lectures is illuminating evidence to prove how popular would be a large series of such free lectures. The audiences at Richmond College have not been made up merely of the academic community, but have been composed of all sorts of people from all parts of the city.

If there could be established here a popular lecture course in the John Marshall High School auditorium, The Times-Dispatch believes that course would soon resolve itself into one of the most effective educational influences in Richmond. The gist of the matter is to secure "the right type of lecturer." Get him, and the people will leave no seat vacant. Why not have the Thomas lectures, given expressly under the auspices of Richmond College, as a part of the course? For the remainder, let the city or public-spirited citizens provide a lecture fund, by means of which the best, most informing lecturers of the country can be brought to Richmond to be heard by the people of the city without cost to them.

Is the education of the citizen to cease when he leaves school? Is there to be no continuation of his education? Why not provide an educational opportunity for the grown-up?

TOURING WITH THE DREADNAUGHT.

Secretary Josephus is a practical man. He wants the navy put, not on a war footing, but on a war footing. As a snapper of naval subuh, he has the sea-dogs all at sea. First, he tried the swivel-chair admiral from their comfortable berths around Washington and sent them out on the treacherous and uncomfortable ocean. Then he expressed the lifelong sentiment of every landlubber with regard to the traditional terms "starboard" and "larboard." Nobody ever really knew which was star and which was larboard, and least of all what board had to do with the matter. If any one ever did find out in the dictionary what the fool words meant, he forgot what he had a chance to use them. No telling how many innocent fishermen have been spilled into the wet while trying to go to the lar by yelling to the star. This jolly mariner from the ping barrens of North Carolina has banished these shibboleths for the sensible terms "right" and "left."

Now he is going to send the fleet Cook-touring through the Adantic Ocean so the honest sailorman can see the world. He thinks that a couple of years loitering round the capitals of Europe will put a high polish on the raw recruit, and give him back to a waiting country ready to become a moving-picture lecturer or anything else useful like that. In R. Kipling's pungent phrase, he is to be "a kind o' bloomin' cosmopolitan."

At least one good will be accomplished. Those Arabian Nights posters over the recruiting stations will at last have some justification in fact. We have never understood why the sight of smiling gentlemen in spotless ducks, lolling in wicker chairs before tents pitched in green and paradisiacal meadows, did not lure the whole adult population into the navy. If ever life looked easy and inviting, it was in the pictures of what the boy who enlisted did with his vast leisure. However, we never met any discharged able seaman who had visited these palmy lands of vine and honey. All of them had a grouse about swabbing down the deck, or coaling, or some such thing that was never in the invitation.

On the Spur of the Moment

By Roy K. Moulton

We're getting' blained sick of the tariff. We're tinkered with the damned thing so long. It seems like it ought to be perfect. But still, it is always dead wrong.

The statesmen go at it each session. They trim and they hammer and pound. They think they're accomplishing something. That is, if you judge by the sound. We always hear so much about it. Set forth in a glittering style. That, somehow, we all get to thinking. There's naught else on earth that's worth while.

Each time we elect a new Congress. We think we will shake this old habit. But still, sure as fate, next election, The tariff is with us once more.

The tariff seems to be possessed of a thousand more lives than a cat. I guess that no man understands it. Republican nor Democrat.

I hope when we all get to heaven. The tariff harangue will be through. But we have good reason to doubt it. No such luck for me and for you.

From the Hickoryville Clarion.

Seven years ago I was a poor boy, and I have moved into a fine house, and I am now a successful man. I have been a member of the board of directors of the Hickoryville Clarion for seven years, and I have been a member of the board of directors of the Hickoryville Clarion for seven years.

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At any rate, the navy might as well be traveling around Egypt and along the Riviera as ducking in and out of Hampton Roads. It is a luxury anyhow, so let's have a 34-carat luxury. Perhaps the boys will learn something. They may be able to steer a coulette wheel and box the Louvre. They will certainly get a better idea of the brotherhood that binds all nations together. Last of all, they will come back with some real yarns to delight a stay-at-home people. We need good yarns, even if it takes \$10,000,000 to build a vessel to send after them.

AN "I SHOULD WORRY" BOOK.

It seems a bit strange that there should be a new idea in diary-keeping, for it is such an ancient device, but there is. Buy a little blank book and entitle it your "Worry Book." Every night record in it the thing or things you worried about during the day. At the end of the week or month or year review the records and see how many things caused you absolutely needless worry, the evil things that came not, the good things that you feared might not happen, which did happen.

The little volume is simply an anti-worry specific. Physicians of mind and body have warned us not to be borrowers of trouble. They have observed that most of the things we dread never happen. The worry diary will bear this discovery out. Worry is a terrible disease. It numbers its victims by the hundred thousand. It poisons life and blots out happiness. An antiworry diary is an investment in optimism. Try it.

Up Sinclair seems lost in the matrimonial "Jungle."

Is this Japanese war talk any kin to the war talk that was made in Germany for the sake of the armament manufacturers?

These are the blissful days when we can enjoy sunshine without getting hot.

The American League schedule for Washington is the schedule that gets most attention from the tariff-makers just now.

The next question is: Who won in the Belgium strike?

The annexation committee was surprised to see the prosperity of the country around Richmond. Probably they were not any more surprised than was the country to see the committee.

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AN "I SHOULD WORRY" BOOK.

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The little volume is simply an anti-worry specific. Physicians of mind and body have warned us not to be borrowers of trouble. They have observed that most of the things we dread never happen. The worry diary will bear this discovery out. Worry is a terrible disease. It numbers its victims by the hundred thousand. It poisons life and blots out happiness. An antiworry diary is an investment in optimism. Try it.

Up Sinclair seems lost in the matrimonial "Jungle."

Is this Japanese war talk any kin to the war talk that was made in Germany for the sake of the armament manufacturers?

These are the blissful days when we can enjoy sunshine without getting hot.

The American League schedule for Washington is the schedule that gets most attention from the tariff-makers just now.

The next question is: Who won in the Belgium strike?

The annexation committee was surprised to see the prosperity of the country around Richmond. Probably they were not any more surprised than was the country to see the committee.

On the Spur of the Moment

By Roy K. Moulton

We're getting' blained sick of the tariff. We're tinkered with the damned thing so long. It seems like it ought to be perfect. But still, it is always dead wrong.

The statesmen go at it each session. They trim and they hammer and pound. They think they're accomplishing something. That is, if you judge by the sound. We always hear so much about it. Set forth in a glittering style. That, somehow, we all get to thinking. There's naught else on earth that's worth while.

Each time we elect a new Congress. We think we will shake this old habit. But still, sure as fate, next election, The tariff is with us once more.

The tariff seems to be possessed of a thousand more lives than a cat. I guess that no man understands it. Republican nor Democrat.

I hope when we all get to heaven. The tariff harangue will be through. But we have good reason to doubt it. No such luck for me and for you.

From the Hickoryville Clarion.

Seven years ago I was a poor boy, and I have moved into a fine house, and I am now a successful man. I have been a member of the board of directors of the Hickoryville Clarion for seven years, and I have been a member of the board of directors of the Hickoryville Clarion for seven years.

TOURING WITH THE DREADNAUGHT.

Secretary Josephus is a practical man. He wants the navy put, not on a war footing, but on a war footing. As a snapper of naval subuh, he has the sea-dogs all at sea. First, he tried the swivel-chair admiral from their comfortable berths around Washington and sent them out on the treacherous and uncomfortable ocean. Then he expressed the lifelong sentiment of every landlubber with regard to the traditional terms "starboard" and "larboard." Nobody ever really knew which was star and which was larboard, and least of all what board had to do with the matter. If any one ever did find out in the dictionary what the fool words meant, he forgot what he had a chance to use them. No telling how many innocent fishermen have been spilled into the wet while trying to go to the lar by yelling to the star. This jolly mariner from the ping barrens of North Carolina has banished these shibboleths for the sensible terms "right" and "left."